

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Greenwood Cemetery

other name/site number N/A

2. Location

street & town 6571 St. Louis Ave. N/A not for publication

city or town Hillsdale N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 189 zip code 63121

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles  
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

01/06/04  
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Greenwood Cemetery  
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO  
County and State

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

#### Category of Property

(check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)  
☐ district  
☒ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary: Cemetery

#### Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary: Cemetery

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Rural Cemetery

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

STONE

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Greenwood Cemetery  
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO  
County and State

## 8. Description

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☒ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☒ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage--Black

### Period of Significance

1874-1975

### Significant Dates

1874

### Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Krueger, Herman

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Greenwood Cemetery  
Name of Property

St. Louis County, MO  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 31.25 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 7/3/5/9/1/0 4/2/8/5/7/3/0  
Zone Easting Northing

2 1/5 7/3/6/2/5/0 4/2/8/5/5/0/0  
Zone Easting Northing

3 1/5 7/3/6/2/5/0 4/2/8/5/3/7/0  
Zone Easting Northing

4 1/5 7/3/5/9/7/0 4/2/8/5/4/9/0  
Zone Easting Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brett Rogers and Gary R. Kremer  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date June 30, 2002  
street & number 1136 7th St. telephone 660-882-9161  
city or town Boonville state MO zip code 63233

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs:** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

name/title Friends of Greenwood Cemetery, Inc., C/O Etta Daniels  
street & number P.O. Box 741 telephone 314-772-7466  
city or town Florissant state MO zip code 63033

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**Greenwood Cemetery**  
**St. Louis County, Missouri**

### Summary:

The Greenwood Cemetery is located at 6571 St. Louis Avenue in Hillsdale, St. Louis County, Missouri. The T-shaped property, is 31.25 acres in the rolling countryside to the west of the city of St. Louis. Bounded on the south by St. Louis Avenue (originally Hamburger Avenue) and on the north by a spring fed creek, the cemetery is divided into 22 burial sections. The sections are designated A-I, K-O, R, numbers 1-4, and a Sexton's lot. After World War II sections A and B were divided into the East and West lawns. The property generally slopes from south to north, forming a valley, with the highest section being at the base of the "T" near the entrance of the property. The cemetery contains approximately 50,000 graves ranging in date from 1874 to 1993. Marked graves are predominantly stone and concrete, although other types of grave markings associated with African American burial rituals are present. Recent work on the site has cleared the part of the cemetery of brush and dead trees revealing a property that, while weathered and partially overgrown, retains a high degree of integrity.

### Elaboration:

#### Historic Condition:

Whether by design or by the natural topography of the land, the layout of Greenwood cemetery fit well in the rural cemetery movement of the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The park-like acreage had wooded, rolling hills that represented peace and rest away from the heavily developing urban areas of St. Louis. While representing American romanticism and changing views on death, rural cemeteries also had a practical bent fueled by the threat of cholera, which made burials outside of densely populated areas desirable for public health.

Little work was done to change the natural rolling topography of the cemetery when it was opened in the 1874. A network of roads was cut throughout the cemetery to give access to gravesites. These named roads appear on a map dated to 1909, although the names are omitted in later maps. Greenwood Avenue led from the entrance south along the eastern ridge of the property and looped into the eastern sections of the "T." Greenwood turned into Zion Avenue along the southern edge of sections F, G, and L, ending in a cul-de-sac in section M at the extreme northeastern corner of the property. Martha Avenue forked off Greenwood at section E and descended into the valley, accessing sections 1, 2, and 3 and forming a cul-de-sac in section 4, in the extreme western end of the T. Bethania Avenue forked off Martha and divided section 2 from sections 1 and 3. Originally the roads were probably dirt; by the early 20th century they were graveled, and later they were paved with asphalt. Additional dirt paths extending from the roads provided access to inner sections of the grounds. (See Figure # for historic site plan.)

The cemetery was originally fronted by Krueger's farmhouse, on what later became the West Lawn. The farmhouse served for many years as the cemetery office. In the twentieth century a small columbarium was added nearby (razed). The cemetery entrance was located at the southeast corner of the T, on Hamburger (St. Louis) Avenue. At some point, probably in the early 20th century, two stone gateposts were erected flanking the entrance, with the words "Greenwood" on the west post and "Cemetery" on the east post molded in concrete; a molded decorative botanical motif appears on both posts. At the back of the cemetery was the sexton's house (destroyed by fire in 1979). Around 1910, Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church was constructed just east of the cemetery entrance and has remained a local landmark, mistakenly associated with Greenwood.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Greenwood Cemetery**  
**St. Louis County, Missouri**

Eventually the land surrounding Greenwood was developed into residential neighborhoods. During the 1910's, '20s and '30s construction of homes proceeded to the east and west of the base of the T; about this same time, the land south of the cemetery, along Hamburger (St. Louis) Avenue, was developed for commercial purposes. By the 1940s, the land north of the cemetery was also being developed for residential use. With the exception of Maywood Street, bordering the west arm of the T, the cemetery remains surrounded by older residential neighborhoods ('20s-'50s) on three sides, and by commercial property to the south.

### Current Description and Condition:

Greenwood Cemetery continued to be well maintained by the owners into the late 1970s. In the 1980s it was sold, and since then has experienced severe neglect, abuse and vandalism. Much of the property has reverted to overgrown field and woods. The overgrowth has covered and damaged many grave markers, and is so dense that some sections of the cemetery are impenetrable except in winter months when the vegetation dies back. Roads have become rutted and have not been repaired; some have grown impassable by car. Area residents began to use the site as a dump, mounding it with household trash, discarded appliances, automobiles, furniture, tires, clothing and debris from construction projects. As recently as April 2003 new trash was still being dumped at the site. In addition, vandals have broken and toppled numerous grave markers. Despite the deteriorating condition of Greenwood, burials continued into the 1990s. The cemetery has also been subject to severe erosion. In some older sections, erosion has exposed drainage culverts and toppled or dislodged gravestones; other stones have been covered by washed-out soil. The collapse of some vaults and caskets has caused further erosion. Due to its deteriorated condition, human bones have been uncovered and exposed at various points within the site. Human bones found via surface collection are currently stored at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Department of Anthropology.

In more accessible parts, especially toward the entrance of the cemetery, the areas around some graves have been cleared and tended by family members. Notable are a number of graves that have been covered by white gravel, an African American burial custom imported from the South. Although in many sections of the cemetery, particularly the older ones, markers are obscured, damaged or missing, many granite blocks, slants and flush markers remain in the newer areas in good condition. There are also many remaining homemade concrete markers.

The decline of the property continued unchecked until 1999, when a local preservation organization, the Friends of Greenwood Cemetery Association, Inc., was established with the aim of saving and restoring the property. At the present time, approximately one-third of the cemetery has been cleared of trash and brush, and efforts are continuing to restore grave markers, repair the roads and generally reclaim Greenwood. As of June, 2003, section 2, and blocks A, B, C, D, E, and N as well as the East and West lawns have been cleared of trees and overgrowth. The majority of stones in these areas have been set back in place. Portions of section 1 and block O have also been reclaimed. However, sections C, D, and N, still exhibit large stumps and evidence of soil erosion that has not yet been addressed. Sections 3, 4, and 5 and Blocks H, I, F, G, K, L, M, R, and the Sexton Lot, remain overgrown.

Reclamation and preservation plans for the rest of the site are in place and progressing. Though part of the cemetery is still overgrown, evidence from recently restored areas suggests that a large number of grave markers are extant in uncleared sections.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Greenwood Cemetery**  
**St. Louis County, Missouri**

### Summary:

Greenwood Cemetery, Hillsdale, St. Louis County, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion A in the area of ETHNIC HERITAGE—BLACK. Established on January 19, 1874 by Herman Krueger, this is the first non-sectarian commercial cemetery for African Americans in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The cemetery has approximately 6000 marked graves, but is thought to contain over 50,000 burials. The graves represent a cross section of the African American community in St. Louis from former slaves and common laborers to community leaders in the small but thriving black middle class. The cemetery is characteristic of the rural cemetery movement, however, remnants of African and Southern black burial customs can be found throughout the cemetery. The cemetery documents not only the continuance of traditional burial practices, but also an underrepresented population in St. Louis. The period of significance for the property is 1874 to 1975. The period covers the establishment of the cemetery and years of most heavy use. Under Criterion Consideration G, the period of significance extends into the 1970s due an apparent revival of African-American burial traditions that influenced the design of many grave markers.

### African American St. Louis

Greenwood Cemetery is a significant historic property that reflects and records the general social development of black St. Louis. In order to understand and define the community that utilized the cemetery, it is important to know something about the historical background of African Americans in St. Louis. Before the Civil War, enslaved blacks in the city were primarily house slaves for aristocratic white families. They lived scattered throughout the better areas of St. Louis City. Most free blacks were clustered in slums to the north and south of the central business district, close to available work. Over one-third of employed free black men worked as porters or at some kind of river-connected job. By and large these were menial, unskilled jobs. Free black women generally worked as domestic help. Even before the Civil War a small but prosperous black middle class developed in the city. Despite restrictive state and city ordinances regulating black commerce, this black bourgeoisie owned and operated businesses that served other African Americans; some owned substantial real estate holdings.

From 1865 to 1890 the population of African Americans remained concentrated in the city's central wards and in small pockets throughout the city. On the eve of the First World War, blacks lived in six distinct areas of St. Louis; Elleardsville was the largest. In some of these concentrations, population density averaged 82.46 people per acre (the citywide average was 12.4 people per acre). Between 1890 and World War I, westward movement of whites, along with an expanding population and growth of business and industry, caused drastic changes in black neighborhoods as blacks moved into previously white areas. The World War I years brought the so-called Great Migration of blacks from the South which brought with it an important influx of African American culture. Many of the people buried at Greenwood were originally inhabitants of Mississippi and other Southern states who participated in this Great Migration. By the 1920s large numbers of blacks were concentrated on the central west end of the city, between Jefferson and Grand Avenues, as well as in other segregated areas. The occupational profile of black males in St. Louis was similar to that of black men in other northern cities, such as Chicago, as described by the 1910 census. Many African-American males worked at factory jobs and other menial industrial work, while black women continued to have very limited employment opportunities, still largely as household servants or laundresses. Clearly the African American population in St. Louis was entrenched in a situation of economic and educational poverty created by the legacy of slavery, a

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**Greenwood Cemetery  
St. Louis County, Missouri**

situation that would change little until the governmental programs of the New Deal of the 1930s, and, some thirty years after that, the social changes provoked by the Civil Rights Movement. White discrimination—racism—excluded even skilled blacks from good jobs.

Entering the 1920s, most of black St. Louis lived at, and often slipped below, the poverty line. The superficial prosperity of the 1920s did, however, bring an increase in the city's black middle class, and a corresponding increase in the influence of African American culture. These African Americans are the people who constitute the bulk of the estimated 50,000 people buried at Greenwood: a small number of middle-class citizens and a much greater percentage of the domestic servants and laborers who made up black St. Louis.<sup>1</sup>

### African American Cemeteries in St. Louis

African American cemeteries in St. Louis and elsewhere are also historically significant as both an illustration and an artifact of the Jim Crow era. Prior to the Civil War, slaves had been buried with the families who owned them, in cemetery grounds adjacent to the white family cemetery. This practice, brought to Missouri by Southern migrants, extended to urban cemeteries, where black slaves were buried with their white families. Free blacks were generally buried in potters' fields, city-owned cemeteries and Catholic cemeteries. After Emancipation these practices began to change as segregation of blacks and whites became customary at first and later enforced by law. With the development, in the late nineteenth century, of African American churches (primarily AME and Baptist), many African Americans in St. Louis were buried in church cemeteries. The migration of blacks from the South and the general growth of the St. Louis black community made the timing right for the establishment of commercial cemeteries for African Americans. Greenwood, established in 1874 by Herman Krueger, was the first of these—possibly the first in the state of Missouri. In 1903 the Father Dixon Cemetery was established in south St. Louis County by the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor; and in 1920, inspired by the success of other commercial black cemeteries, Andrew H. Watson established Washington Park Cemetery on Natural Bridge Road; it was to become the largest and most popular African American cemeteries in St. Louis. With desegregation, however, the need for separate cemeteries eventually ended, as did the commercial viability of St. Louis' black privately owned cemeteries. By the 1980s all three commercial black cemeteries in the city had been sold to new owners, who soon discovered that there were no perpetual-care funds to maintain the facilities. The only source of income was the sale of new plots—a source inadequate to the maintenance needs at Greenwood.<sup>2</sup> The result was that the cemetery rapidly declined and became a dumping ground and target for vandals. Current reclamation and restoration efforts have so far made only small progress in returning the cemetery to its original condition.

### History of Greenwood Cemetery

Herman Krueger established Greenwood Cemetery on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1874, after resigning his position as superintendent of St. Peter's Cemetery on Lucas and Hunt Road. Krueger clearly envisioned

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence O. Christensen, *Black St. Louis: A Study in Race Relations 1865-1916*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Morris, *Sacred Green Space: A Survey of Cemeteries in St. Louis County* (St. Louis, MO.: np, 2000).



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**Greenwood Cemetery**  
**St. Louis County, Missouri**

the need—and potential profitability—of a private black cemetery. Greenwood was the first commercial burial ground for area African Americans, and as such it evidenced the postwar trend toward segregation in all aspects of life—and death. In 1890 Krueger sold Greenwood to his son-in-law, Adolph Foelsch. The Foelsch family operated the cemetery until 1981. Adolph Foelsch, Jr. was president for many years; his brother William was the secretary-treasurer and another brother, William, was the sexton. Later the cemetery was managed by Oscar Foelsch, whose son, Theodore, managed it afterward. The Foelsches lived in the vicinity of the cemetery and worked cooperatively to maintain the grounds, digging graves by hand and horse drawn plow, with Clydesdale horses. The family manufactured concrete tombstones on the grounds beginning in the 1910s; in the 1950s, when they had ceased producing the large planters that had been the standard, they began offering flat concrete tablets with embedded stained glass in a variety of colors and shapes (crosses, hearts, and stars are most common). Funerals were numerous through the '40s and '50s, according to Marlene Britt, Krueger's great-great granddaughter, who grew up in the sexton's house at the back of the cemetery. Britt recalls that caskets were brought to the front of the cemetery and taken to the gravesite by horse and wagon, with the funeral procession following behind. Consistent with African American tradition, Britt remembers funerals as being highly emotional events, sending-off parties at which mourners screamed, cried and sometimes even jumped into the graves. On Memorial Day there were huge celebrations at Greenwood. The Foelsches sold concessions (sodas and sandwiches, and paint cans full of water). Britt also remembers that some of the people interred at Greenwood were victims of violence: gunshot victims, and sometimes victims of unsolved murders.<sup>3</sup>

In 1993 the cemetery was purchased by Solomon Rooks. Rooks was banking on receiving the contract to reinter bodies from Washington Park Cemetery when Lambert Field airport expanded onto what had been part of the cemetery grounds. However, Rooks did not win the contract, and was financially unable to maintain Greenwood. On March 1, 1999, a not-for-profit grass roots organization consisting of the descendent community and academic professionals, the Friends of Greenwood Cemetery, Inc., was established. The group's goal was to restore and preserve the site for use as a historic park as well as an educational and tourism resource to celebrate St. Louis's African American heritage. The Friends enlisted community support, coordinated volunteer labor and began to acquire donations and grants from such diverse groups and corporations as the Boy Scouts, employees of Southwestern Bell, Monsanto, Whitaker Foundation. On May 1, 2000, Missouri Attorney General Jay Nixon declared the cemetery "abandoned" under a new law. The corporations that owned it were dissolved, and the St. Louis County Court transferred ownership of the property to St. Louis County. The Missouri National Guard was then enlisted to help with an initial cleanup of the cemetery, removing cars, brush and other debris. Cleanup efforts have continued with the Guard's support, until the cemetery's ownership was transferred to the Friends of Greenwood Cemetery in May, 2002. While this transfer grants autonomy to the organization in its preservation efforts, it also places the burden of financing the endeavor entirely on this under-funded local organization. The cemetery has proved to be a valuable teaching tool for students in the St. Louis County public schools as well as college and university students from University of Missouri-St. Louis and William Woods University, which have used the site to teach anthropology, history, mathematics, and other disciplines. Clearly, Greenwood offers enormous promise as an educational and tourist resource.

The compelling oral record regarding Greenwood leaves no doubt of its historic, cultural and social importance to St. Louis, and particularly St. Louis African Americans. Knowledgeable informants

<sup>3</sup> Marlene Britt, telephone interview, St. Peters, Missouri, June 21, 2002.

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**Greenwood Cemetery**  
**St. Louis County, Missouri**

speak of the black musicians, civil rights leaders and other key individuals associated with the development of black St. Louis who are said to be buried there. According to the oral tradition, one of the first burials at Greenwood was that of Abraham Lincoln's personal aide. Unfortunately, the deteriorated condition of the cemetery and many of its stones, as well as incomplete burial records, make it difficult or impossible to verify much of this oral information. Approximately twenty percent of the burial records to 1906 are extant; these records confirm approximately 5,000 burials during the cemetery's first twenty-eight years. No records have been located for the years 1906-1939. From 1940 to 1993, burial records are nearly complete. Twenty-five thousand people are documented as being buried in Greenwood.<sup>4</sup> The oral records claim that 30,000 are buried in the cemetery, but that number is obviously incorrect given the vast gaps in burial records and the fact that records are missing for many years in which mortality was particularly high owing to war and epidemic. Extrapolating from the records we do have, and taking into account those periods when mortality was especially high, we have arrived at an estimate of at least 50,000 individuals interred at Greenwood Cemetery—an estimate that is conservative in light of the numbers of documented burials. Oral informants claim that there are numerous double burials in Greenwood, especially in older parts of the cemetery. If—as is almost certainly true—there are 50,000 people buried in the thirty-one-acre cemetery, then the oral informants are certainly correct. The number is staggering, and reinforces the importance of the site as a resource waiting to yield a wealth of information about black St. Louis to historians, anthropologists and other students and scholars of African American history and culture.

### **Greenwood as Representative of the Rural Cemetery Movement**

Greenwood Cemetery exemplifies a significant change in typical burial practices nationwide that originated in the early part of the nineteenth century. Prior to this time cemeteries were typically attached to churches; larger public cemeteries were located within towns and cities. In the 1830s, the rise of Romanticism, with its emphasis on the aesthetic and spiritual consolations of nature, together with growing public health concerns, gave birth to the rural cemetery movement. Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Boston (1832) is generally thought to be the first such cemetery. Other country cemeteries in the East became prototypes for what would soon become a national trend toward moving burial grounds outside of urban areas. While Romanticism influenced the aesthetics of these cemeteries with their park-like landscaping that often included ponds and open lawns, and that allowed for larger, more ornate grave markers and sculptures, public health priorities fueled the movement. The burial of large numbers of bodies in crowded city cemeteries could put populations at risk, especially during periods of epidemic; cholera was a major concern.<sup>5</sup> Greenwood is characteristic of the rural cemetery movement in its location—to the west of urban St. Louis, just outside the St. Louis County boundary—and landscaping; significantly, the cemetery was established in the wake of a cholera epidemic that had decimated St. Louis in the 1860s. Greenwood's landscape features typify the rural cemetery trend: Krueger's design featured rolling hills with impressive vistas, broad east and west lawns, mature trees and winding roads that gave access to individual gravesites. In addition to its importance as the first commercial cemetery for African Americans in St. Louis—and the only extant site associated with parts of that community—Greenwood, with its distinctive rural-cemetery features, is important as an example of this large-scale movement that permanently changed American burial practices.

<sup>4</sup> Greenwood Cemetery Records. Western Historical Manuscript Collection. University of Missouri-St. Louis.

<sup>5</sup> Rosenberg, Charles E. *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

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**Greenwood Cemetery**  
**St. Louis County, Missouri**

### People Interred at Greenwood

Of the more than 50,000 estimated interments at Greenwood, most are ordinary African American laborers; another, smaller group consists of middle-class blacks. Although some people buried in Greenwood were free blacks before the Civil War, a large percentage of burials from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were of former slaves from Missouri as well as the South. Included are members of fraternal organizations, especially the Prince Hall Masons, who established an active organization in St. Louis after the Civil War. Also buried there are a number of African Americans who significantly influenced St. Louis history. The following profiles provide a sense of the diverse contributions of individuals buried at Greenwood.

### Harriet Robinson Scott—Supreme Court Case plaintiff and wife of Dred Scott (1815-1876)

Although Harriet Scott, best known as the wife of Dred Scott, is much less well known, she herself was a plaintiff in the famous state and U.S. Supreme Court case that eventually nullified the Missouri Compromise and elevated the dispute over slavery that ended in the Civil War. Scott was born a slave, in Virginia, and taken by her master, Indian agent Major Lawrence Taliaferro, to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. When Dred Scott was later brought to Fort Snelling by his master, Dr. John Emerson, the two met and married (1838). Emerson, an army surgeon, was later transferred, and the Scotts moved with him to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis; Harriet had given birth to a daughter during the trip. Upon their arrival in St. Louis, Harriet and Dred were hired out to Captain Henry Bainbridge, a relative of Emerson's wife, Irene. In 1843 John Emerson died, leaving a will that did not specify the disposition of Dred or Harriet. The couple continued to work for Bainbridge and another family, while Irene collected their wages in absentia—she had gone for several years to Massachusetts. In 1846 the Scotts filed separate suits for their freedom in the St. Louis Circuit Court, on the grounds that they had established residency in a free state with the knowledge of Mrs. Emerson (the case was later consolidated because the legal considerations were essentially the same). Irene Emerson appealed to the Missouri Supreme Court in 1850; during the proceedings she married a New York doctor and antislavery congressman, and subsequently gave the Scotts to her brother, John Sanford, who eventually won the case. After the state Supreme Court decided in favor of Sanford, the Scotts appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which also decided against them. Dissenting Justice Benjamin Curtis contended that there was no documentation of Harriet's sale to Dr. Emerson, and because Taliaferro had indicated that he intended to free Harriet when she married, Scott was a free woman and her children were born free. In one sense Harriet Scott was a typical plaintiff in a St. Louis slave suit for freedom: women, who sought freedom for their families, and especially their children, filed Sixty percent of such suits. Despite the rejection of their plea by the Supreme Court, the Scotts were ultimately freed. Sanford died almost immediately after the final decision, leaving the couple to Taylor Blow, who freed them. After Dred died in 1858 of tuberculosis, Harriet continued to live in St. Louis and work as a laundress.<sup>6</sup> Harriet died at age sixty-one, on June 20, 1876. Her significance as a plaintiff in one of the most famous court cases in American history is indubitable.

<sup>6</sup> Duane Meyer, *The Heritage of Missouri: A History*, (St. Louis: State Publishing Co., 1973) 331-332. Also see: Katherine Douglass' "Harriet Robinson Scott" in Katherine T. Corbett, *In Her Place: A Guide to St. Louis Women's History* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1999) 61-62.

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### **Washington Reed—Civil War veteran (1828 or 1829-1915)**

Among the men interred at Greenwood are veterans from almost every major American war, from the Civil War through Vietnam. Documented burials include soldiers from the Civil War, World War I and World War II; most of their graves are marked with veterans' headstones. One representative veteran is Washington Reed, a soldier during the Civil War. Reed was part Indian (his mother was half black, half Indian). Based on his literacy and the fact that he was employed in St. Louis as a waiter prior to the war, he was probably born a free black. On October 17, 1863 he joined the Union Army as a private in Racine, Wisconsin, at age 28; for his enlistment he received a \$100 bounty. From Wisconsin he traveled to Rhode Island, where he was assigned to the 14<sup>th</sup> Rhode Island Colored Heavy Artillery, designated 11<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery; there he received his military training. His unit was mustered November 4, 1863, and, probably owing to his literacy, Reed was promoted to sergeant on November 10 of that year. In 1864 the 11<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery was sent to defend New Orleans, sailing on the transport *Daniel Webster*. They remained in New Orleans until 1865.<sup>7</sup> Following the war Reed returned to the St. Louis area, where he met and married Carrie Carter, daughter of a Civil War veteran and former slave; the couple would have at least seven children. He rented land, began to make a living as a farmer, and at the turn of the century bought a forty-four-acre tract, originally part of the Breckinridge estate, which was being sold for back taxes. He built a house, still extant, on this property. (Some years after his death, the land was developed for residential housing and remains a black residential development, Breckinridge Estates). Reed died in May, 1915; he was succeeded by noteworthy descendants: His grandson, Robert Carter, became an acclaimed St. Louis musician, and his great-grandson, Robert's son, is a California Supreme Court Justice.

### **Orrie Rice—former slave (1829 or 1830-1888)**

Orrie Rice was born in Virginia, master unknown. She was later purchased by the Diggs family, who came from Virginia to Glasgow, Missouri; probably Rice was purchased by them in Virginia and brought by Francis Diggs and his five sisters to Missouri around 1840. Orrie would become the personal slave of Kitty Diggs, a spinster. The Diggses were well-to-do for the area. In the 1850s Orrie met and married Spottswood Rice, who worked as a tobacco roller in the factory of his master, Benjamin Lewis, a local tobacco baron in Glasgow.<sup>8</sup> At the time of the Civil War, the Lewis brothers employed 400-500 people, of whom 125 were slaves owned by the Lewis family. In 1862, the Lewises are believed to have taken a Union position and freed their slaves, employing wage slaves. Orrie and Spottswood had five children, three daughters and three sons. One of their daughters, Mary Rice (she became Mary Bell at age twenty-two) was interviewed in St. Louis at age eighty-five, as part of the WPA Slave narratives. In Mary's words, "Slavery was a mighty hard life." She recalled that her father was allowed to visit her mother on Wednesdays and Saturdays. She also remembered that once Spottswood came "home" bloody from beatings by a black overseer. Orrie washed his bloodstained clothes and tended his wounds so he could return to the Lewis plantation clean. Spottswood enlisted in the Union army in Glasgow on

<sup>7</sup> Robert Carter, interview, tape recording, St. Louis, MO., Feb. 16, 2002. Also see: William H. Chenery, *Fourteenth Regiment Rhode Island Heavy Artillery in the War to Preserve the Union, 1861-1865* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1898, Rpt. 1969).

<sup>8</sup> *Illustrated Atlas Map of Howard County, Mo.* (St. Louis: The Missouri Publishing Co., 1876).

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February 2, 1864.<sup>9</sup> Against Benjamin Lewis's wishes, Spottswood had been taught to read by one of the Lewis sons. In 1864 Spottswood wrote two now-famous letters to his children, announcing his intent to reclaim them from Kitty Diggs when the army arrived in Glasgow. Another letter, to Kitty Diggs, advised her that if she kept his daughter she would burn in hell. Francis Diggs responded to these letters by writing a letter of protest to General Rosecrans. After the war, Orrie and Spottswood and their children were reunited and moved to St. Louis. While Spottswood found work as a nurse, Orrie took in laundry for white families. Orrie died on March 19, 1888 at 58 years of age. At the time of her death she lived at 7505 Elliott Avenue in St. Louis.<sup>10</sup>

### **Lee Shelton—American folk hero "Stagger Lee" (1865-1912)**

Lee Shelton ("Stagger" or "Stacker" Lee) was the figure who in real life killed William Lyons in a barroom argument on Christmas night in 1895. This action spawned numerous stories, toasts, and songs throughout the twentieth century by artists as various as Woody Guthrie and The Grateful Dead; they established Stagger Lee as an American cultural hero, whose legend lived especially in music of every genre, from jazz to folk to rap (Shelton's dispute with Lyons has inspired at least 150 songs that span three centuries, from 1896 to the present).<sup>11</sup> Lee Shelton grew up as a cabin boy on Memphis based riverboats, where his father was a captain. He took his name from his father, Stacker Lee, though Lee called himself "Stack." He moved to St. Louis with his family in the 1880s, where he lived at 1314 Morgan Street and worked as a waiter, among other menial occupations. At age thirty he killed "Billy" Lyons with a rifle over an argument that began as a political dispute and ended as a fight over the damage Shelton caused to Lyons's hat. Shelton was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to twenty-five years in the state penitentiary. In 1909 he was paroled; he then returned to St. Louis and operated a saloon. A legend in his own time, Lee and his story were featured in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1911. About this time he was convicted of robbery and sent back to prison. He was paroled in 1912 but died in a prison hospital in March of that year. His heroic mystique, for turn-of-the-century blacks was based on his character as a gambler, womanizer and generally mean individual in a hard world; it reflected the suspicion many African Americans harbored that social reform was virtually impossible. As African American identity grew and changed, the Stagger Lee legend was also transformed. In the 1960s he once again became a folk hero for a new generation of disillusioned blacks.

### **Charleton Hunt Tandy—civil rights leader (1836-1919)**

Tandy, born in Kentucky, was the son and grandson of free blacks. He was educated by private tutors, who taught him to read and write at an early age. In 1857, at age twenty-one, Tandy migrated to

<sup>9</sup> George P. Rawick. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, Vol. 11 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Co. 1941, Rpt. 1972). Although Spottswood stated in his pension application that he enlisted in Glasgow, Mary Bell claimed that in 1863 her father and ten other slaves either escaped or fled the Lewis plantation and enlisted in the U.S. Army in Kansas City. When the local patrollers from Glasgow caught up with them, they were turned away on the grounds that as U.S. soldiers the men were protected.

<sup>10</sup> Spottswood Rice, "Claim of Officer and Soldier for Invalid Pension," June 16, 1883.

<sup>11</sup> See Kelly O'Brien and Julie Lipsitz "The Legend of Lee Shelton," unpublished manuscript, May, 2002 and George M. Eberhart, "Stack Lee: The Man, The Music, and the Myth," *Popular Music and Society* 20:1 (Spring, 1996) 1-70.

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St. Louis; his marriage two years later to Annie Bell produced nine children. During the Civil War Tandy received a captain's commission in the U.S. Army. He organized black recruits into Company B, 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Missouri Colored Volunteers. During the later years of the war he participated in various skirmishes throughout the state. Following the war Tandy entered public life, earning ten commissions, including Chief Messenger of U.S. Customs, Deputy City Collector and Deputy Marshall. With the failure of Reconstruction in the South, Tandy was on the forefront of a massive relief effort for or involving migrating exodusters passing through St. Louis; he helped to provide food and clothing, medical care and temporary jobs. Tandy even financed the remainder of their trek to Kansas. Through his writings and oratory he established himself as a key leader of the nineteenth-century civil rights movement, the foremost spokesman for black St. Louisans and a champion of freedmen. His speeches exposed the racism responsible for the conditions under which blacks lived in the South, and revealed how racism was fundamentally responsible for the failure of Reconstruction. In 1865, along with James Milton Turner, Tandy helped organize the Missouri Equal Rights League, Missouri's first black political movement, which advocated suffrage and complete equality in all areas of politics for freedmen. He was later a key organizer for numerous liberal Republican clubs in the 1870s. Tandy's lifelong mission was the betterment of life for African Americans in St. Louis, largely through improved education. His eloquent speeches and writings were heavily responsible for changes in black life on a local level. His lasting legacy is the end of Jim Crow laws in the streetcar industry of St. Louis, through his organization of and participation in boycotts of the streetcar system.<sup>12</sup> On September 1, 1919 he died at eighty-three years of age.

**Horton Frizell Euell—Laborer (1907-1985); Susie Beatrice Hollins Euell—Housewife/domestic (1912-1988)**

Susie Euell was born in Yazoo County, Mississippi, on March 10, 1912, the youngest of five children of sharecroppers, Jordan Hollins and Rilla Powell. Horton was born to Alfred and Martha Euell, probably sharecroppers as well, on March 15, 1907. He, too, was born in Yazoo County, Mississippi, the youngest of eight. The couple married on March 4, 1930 and produced six children. In 1936 the Euells moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where Horton became a member of LaSalle Methodist Church and worked as a menial laborer at a variety of jobs while Susie raised the children and took in laundry for white families. Susie Euell became a member of Rock Chapel A.M.E. Church in 1939. Horton died on August 24, 1985, and Susie on July 8, 1988. The Euells typify the many African Americans who left the South for St. Louis in the first half of the twentieth century in search of a better life. Most had minimal educations and worked as ordinary, menial laborers while they struggled to support families; many, like the Euells, were members of A.M.E. churches. By far the majority of the people buried at Greenwood were working-class blacks, of whom little is documented. Greenwood Cemetery is the only historic site affiliated with many individuals like the Euells, whose economic, social and cultural contribution to St. Louis history is fundamental but largely unrecorded.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence O. Christensen et.al., ed., *Dictionary of Missouri Biography* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Geraldine Jones, interview, Hillsdale, MO., May 21, 2001.

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### **Walter Davis—Composer, singer and nationally renowned blues pianist (1912-1963)**

Davis was born in Grenada, Mississippi, on a cotton farm. In the mid-1920s he moved to St. Louis, where he scraped by, sleeping in boxcars while he established his reputation as a musician; in the later '20s he performed in a club whose owner was named J.C. A talented singer and piano player, he became known for his two-fisted piano-playing style. Davis's recording career spanned twenty years (1930-1953); he cut 150 sides, and was one of the most prolific blues musicians of pre-war St. Louis. Famous works include: "Sweet Sixteen," "I Can Tell by the Way You Smell," "Ashes in My Whiskey," "Stop That Train In Harlem," "Root Man Blues," "Fallin' Rain," and his best-known, 1931 recording, "Sunnyland Blues". His last hit, in 1952, was "Tears Came Rollin' Down." After suffering a stroke in the early '50s, Davis turned from music to the ministry; he continued to preach until he died on October 22, 1963.<sup>14</sup> Davis is representative of a number of St. Louis blues musicians traditionally believed to be buried at Greenwood. Because of incomplete cemetery records, other musicians' graves have not yet been documented; however, given the significance of the St. Louis blues industry in the early twentieth century and the number of individuals buried at Greenwood, it seems reasonable to assume that other African American musicians' graves will eventually be located there.

### **Albert I. Holman—District Deputy Grand Master, Prince Hall Masons (1916-1980)**

Among the men and women buried at Greenwood are many members of fraternal organizations (Prince Hall Masons, Shriners, Elks, Knights of Pythias, Eastern Star, etc.). These organizations helped African Americans, especially immigrants to St. Louis, establish themselves by finding jobs and homes; they engaged in relief efforts for the economically straitened and supported schools and charities that benefited the black population. Their membership included many of the most prominent men in the St. Louis black community. All promoted values of honesty and hard work. More than any other fraternal organization, the Prince Hall Masons supported and furthered the betterment of African Americans in St. Louis. Albert I. Holman is one of the numerous members of such organizations buried at Greenwood, and one of the best-known black Masons in later twentieth-century St. Louis. Prince Hall #10 was the first lodge to open in St. Louis, in 1857 (it was one of the first lodges established west of the Mississippi). The second was Lone Star #22 (1859), followed by H. McGee Alexander #8 (1871). All were granted charters at the same time, through the Grand Lodge of Ohio. Later these individual lodges established their own Grand Lodge of Missouri. Black Masonry grew; in 1909 there were nine chapters in St. Louis, and their financial support was sufficient to buy a Masonic Hall. The apex of the Masonic Lodge in St. Louis was during the World War II years; there were thirty active lodges at that time. Previously employed by the WPA, Albert I. Holman came from California to St. Louis in 1960. He worked at a variety of jobs there, from cab driver to deliveryman, married and had five children. Through his dedicated membership in the Prince Hall Masons, Holman recruited new members and helped to coordinate service and charity efforts.

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<sup>14</sup> Kernfeld, Berry, ed. *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994).  
*Biographical Directory of Afro-American and African Musicians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).  
Also see: Henry Townsend as told to Bill Greensmith, *A Blues Life*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999) 74-80.

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He became District Deputy Grand Master around 1970. He died in 1983; subsequently a new lodge was established: Albert Holman Lodge #179, which is still active today.<sup>15</sup>

### Gravestones

Of the more than 50,000 graves at Greenwood Cemetery, an estimated 6,000 are marked by grave markers of various kinds, including wooden crosses, Victorian carved stones and monuments, vernacular concrete markers, modern slabs, flushes and upright stones in granite or limestone, veterans' stones, salvaged architectural ornament and other items that have been adapted for funerary use, and organic markers in the form of shrubs. The present condition of the site makes it difficult to estimate the number of grave markers, since many remain toppled, or buried under debris, dirt or overgrowth. It is important to note that even originally the number of markers present on the grounds was not indicative of the number of people buried there; many graves, especially those from the late nineteenth century, were never marked, while others were marked with fieldstones that have since vanished or wooden markers that have decayed. In the twentieth century, graves were often marked only with temporary funeral-home markers that disappeared over time. To some extent the absence of permanent grave markers is a reflection of differing emphases between white and African American funeral and burial customs. The African American prioritization of elaborate funeral and well-made protective casket over permanent monument means that many graves at Greenwood have been minimally or perhaps temporarily marked. African American tradition emphasized the funeral—the "send off"—and, even in the twentieth century, many blacks upheld that traditional emphasis on an elaborate—if not highly emotional—funeral, at the expense of a substantial monument.<sup>16</sup> Conversely, seemingly as a matter of priority, working class whites placed little emphasis on the funeral itself in favor of a monument of remembrance and, moreover, overwhelmingly chose carved, professionally manufactured stones over home-made markers—a conscious distinction that served to distance them even further from blacks.

The markers at Greenwood are significant in several ways: Some reflect distinctive African American burial traditions; some are notable artistically. In general they confirm the diversity of the local African American population and record the development of a black middle-class within a largely marginalized ethnic minority. However, most of the people interred there were ordinary laborers whose culture was deeply rooted in black Southern tradition. The folks buried in Greenwood were, by and large, more likely to embrace and preserve traditions passed down from previous generations; cultural ways and beliefs were inseparable from the rhythms of everyday life. Despite the twentieth-century ethos of assimilation even within the black working class, segregation in St. Louis and elsewhere fostered the preservation of black Southern tradition in one form or another, as it was transplanted from rural areas of the South and adapted to a new environment outside its traditional cultural confines. To be sure, the downside of desegregation was an apparent and tragic discontinuation of black tradition in the face of white cultural hegemony.

<sup>15</sup> Kennard Jones. Telephone interview, March 23, 2002 and July 2, 2002. St. Louis, MO. Interview. Hillsdale, MO., May 27, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> See discussion of African American caskets and funerals in: Karla F.L. Holloway, *Passed On: African American Mourning Stories* (Duke U.P., 2002).



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### Markers of Artistic and Cultural significance

Greenwood features several fine examples of professionally carved Victorian stones and monuments dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; in addition the cemetery features many vernacular concrete stones noteworthy as examples of innovations in gravestone art. The stone of Romeo West stands as an excellent example of stones/monuments representative of the former group. The Victorian aesthetic of elaborate—sometime excessive—and highly detailed ornamentation is evidenced in ornate stones that can be legitimately called “funerary art.” Dating to 1919, the Romeo West stone (Section J) is in the form of a tree stump; iconographically it symbolic of a life cut short (West was only thirty-eight years old at the time of his death). Carved out of limestone, the piece reflects the work of a master stone carver in its incredible attention to detail, as evidenced in the naturalistic quality of the tree trunk, bark, and flowers. Stones like this are not common at Greenwood, but the handful that are there confirm the middle-class status of some of the people buried in the cemetery (such elaborate monuments would have been out of reach for working-class blacks) and merit documentation and study as significant examples of gravestone art. Particularly unusual is the fact that traditional nineteenth-century gravestone motifs are carried on in Greenwood stones that date as late as the 1960s. Sadly, due to their size and obviousness, these markers have been favorite targets of vandals; very few remain completely intact.

The common use of concrete at the beginning of the twentieth century provided a new medium for funerary art, offering new possibilities for vernacular expression. For African Americans, especially in urban areas, concrete soon replaced fieldstones or wooden crosses and tablets as the material of choice for markers. Inexpensive and durable, it was an excellent medium for traditional memorial expression by a marginalized community. These concrete markers include “house stones” manufactured on the premises by the Foelsch family for African American patrons, vernacular homemade markers created by members of the surviving family or by individuals commissioned by the family, and manufactured concrete ornaments that have been adapted for funerary use. Concrete markers initially proliferated at Greenwood because the Foelsches offered relatively inexpensive markers, manufactured in a small barn on the southwest corner of the property from about 1910 through the 1950s.<sup>17</sup> These simple monuments with upright head marker and attached enclosure, were often customized by the patron. All have an attached rectangular, or occasionally round-cornered, planter extending the full length of the body (small ones for children and full-length ones for adults), with a burial number inscribed at the foot. Some have been personalized by the addition of fraternal symbols and other short inscriptions and occasionally a standard bronze veteran’s plaque is affixed. Beyond a prescribed inscription, personal expression was usually limited and was confined primarily to the use of the planter portion where loved ones planted iris, periwinkles and other flowers. The present condition of the site makes it difficult to estimate the actual number of concrete grave markers, since many have been toppled, broken apart by erosion, or buried under debris, dirt or overgrowth. However, in sections dating from 1910-1950, the type is seemingly ubiquitous.

Referring specifically to the use of concrete in African American grave markers in the South, John Vlach has rightly noted that “novelty provides a new format for the expression of tradition.”<sup>18</sup> Extant vernacular concrete markers at Greenwood Cemetery supports this claim in several ways—from the

<sup>17</sup> Britt.

<sup>18</sup> John Michael Vlach. *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978) 142-144.

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embedding of shells and various grave goods in numerous markers, to the bold use of ready-made or recycled concrete objects as markers in and of themselves.

As early as the late nineteenth century, historians began to make connections between African American funerary practices in those places where blacks were concentrated during and after slavery—Georgia and South Carolina's Sea Islands in particular—and obvious African antecedents. Observers noticed that African American graves in the rural South are sometimes distinguished by careful arrangement of offerings placed on top of graves or traditional burial mounds.<sup>19</sup> Within the last two decades, historians have more fully examined the scope and persistence of these mortuary traditions and placed them within the broader context of characteristically African American culture that has been diffused with the advent of major black demographic changes, adapted to environments outside the South, and simultaneously both preserved and diluted with the passing of time. Such is the case in St. Louis, as Southern blacks extended the boundaries of Southern funerary tradition. In their African American context, the offerings function as both a statement of homage and according to folk belief, as a pacifying influence to "keep a tempestuous soul at rest."<sup>20</sup> Connecting this tradition to its African origin, Robert Ferris Thompson notes that objects used as decorations on Kongo graves "cryptically honor the spirit in the earth, guide it to other worlds, and prevent it from wandering or returning to haunt survivors." The grave goods are sometimes the last items that the deceased used or touched in this world and stand as material reflections of the spirit.<sup>21</sup> These mortuary practices and beliefs that permeated west and central African cultures. Though numerous in variations these practices had enough commonality to provide "a stable basis for their continued practice on this side of the Atlantic."<sup>22</sup> In slavery these burial traditions persisted in the form of cultural survivals, that were adapted and preserved within individual African American communities—slave and free. As Richard Stoffle and Demetri Shimkin note: "even under the worst conditions of slavery and institutionalized racism...Afro-Americans sought to maintain autonomy and cultural persistence."<sup>23</sup> To some degree, this penchant for "cultural persistence" as evidenced even today in the broader cultural spectrum, was retained in successive generations after Emancipation.

In the early 1980s, scholars began for the first time to note the presence of black Southern tradition in St. Louis' larger burial grounds. After a cursory survey of African-derived burial patterns in St. Louis, one scholar noted that that tradition had indeed diffused this far North, citing some of the same basic evidence addressed herein. But she went on to explain that what was transplanted and temporarily sustained there eventually eroded in the face of social realities. She concluded: "I realized that I had found little that was distinctive about Afro-American graves in St. Louis and few examples of a continuing African burial tradition such as those so visible in Southern cemeteries"<sup>24</sup> Despite her findings, black tradition at Greenwood is unquestionable, though not always immediately obvious: grave goods appear in a myriad of interesting forms, from toys placed on children's graves, to broken pottery, shells, and other

<sup>19</sup> Ernest Ingersoll, "Decoration of Negro Graves," *Journal of American Folklore* 5 (1892): 68-69.

<sup>20</sup> Vlach, 143.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Ferris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983).

<sup>22</sup> Vlach, 143.

<sup>23</sup> Richard W. Stoffle and Demetri B. Shimkin. "Explorations in Afro-American Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* XXVII: 2.

<sup>24</sup> Kathy McKoy, "Afro-American Cemeteries in St. Louis," *Gateway Heritage* 6.3 (Winter 1985-86) 36.

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items. Unfortunately, modern cemetery maintenance is by definition at odds with the tradition of arranged "loose" grave offerings, and, with few exceptions, material offerings at Greenwood have been destroyed or removed from their original settings. The Foelsches operated a highly efficient business, and the uniform maintenance of the grounds was paramount; displays reflecting tradition must have been indistinguishable to them from common mortuary decoration, which was eventually discarded or, if less obvious, scattered in the process of mowing. The persistent dumping of trash throughout the property has made current identification of such graves even more difficult. In the winter of 2002, an arrangement of yew branches-traditionally symbolizing eternal life-was found carefully arranged on the grave of Araminta Littrell. Within the branches, a long strip of black and white patterned cloth, distinctly African in design, was carefully arranged around the modern slant headstone and laid horizontally from head to foot, holding the branches in place. What makes this particular example intriguing is the fact that the offering was recent and thus reflects a living tradition rather than simply a tradition that existed at the time of burial (Littrell died in the 1960s). Although other ephemeral displays like this one have been discovered and documented at Greenwood, they are rare. Despite the urbanization of rural Southern immigrants over generations, the eventual loosening of family ties, and the encroachment of white culture resulting from increased assimilation and, more recently, formal and informal desegregation, black St. Louis, with its strong Southern roots, extended and nurtured traditional African American burial practices.

A more obvious manifestation of the latter tradition at Greenwood is the presence of conch shells used in grave ornamentation. According to West African tradition, shells, especially conches, placed on the grave function as a mediating force and are believed to "enclose the soul's immortal presence."<sup>25</sup> Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, African American graves throughout the South have been adorned with what Thompson has argued convincingly is a "Kongo emblem of perdurance," and their appearance and arrangement in grave art a distinct Kongo-American tradition. Moreover, the shell is also a water symbol, which is fraught with meaning in Africa. Zairean tradition held that the spirit world is located beneath rivers or lakebeds. Even the color of the shell itself--white--alludes to this watery spirit world, where the inhabitants are believed to be white creatures.<sup>26</sup> In connecting the African-American use of shells in Texas cemeteries to their trans-Atlantic antecedents, Terry Jordan points out that ceremonial offerings of shells were, in fact, common all along Africa's slave coast.<sup>27</sup>

Shells have surfaced randomly in almost all sections of the cemetery, especially in areas where reburials have occurred and in areas experiencing severe erosion; none remain where they were originally arranged. The best and most classic example of African American shell ornamentation at Greenwood is the Grant Landers marker (Section 3), which dates from 1933. It is a typical concrete Foelsch "house" marker utilizing a simple design, including an upright poured tablet with basic inscription and an attached rectangular planter. The Landers marker has been embellished by the addition of eight conch shells inset in concrete within the planter and staggered in two vertical lines from the head to the foot of the grave. In the context of African-American tradition, the Landers marker may be viewed as a kind of cosmogram; the arrangement of shells serves as a dividing line: the division between the realm of the living, above, and that of the spirit world below.<sup>28</sup> What makes the Landers marker unique is

<sup>25</sup> Thompson, 135.

<sup>26</sup> Vlach, 143.

<sup>27</sup> Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), 155.

<sup>28</sup> Thompson, 135; Vlach, 144.

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the fact that the arrangement is permanent, fixed in concrete. This particular marker stands as one of the finest examples of the black funerary tradition of shell ornamentation yet identified in Missouri.

As evinced in the Landers marker, African/African American tradition often incorporates white grave objects—crushed shells, white stones, and pieces of white pottery. A number of graves are mounded with white gravel, a Southern black tradition, probably derived from the African tradition of white grave goods. Along more practical lines, the gravel keeps weeds from obscuring the plot. The graves of Albert and Irene Harrold (Section A) are a fine example of this tradition. Here, the gravel, and indeed the tradition are renewed on a regular basis by loved ones

After the house monuments sold by the cemetery, small homemade rectangular, arched or angular molded forms are most typical; these display very basic inscriptions, sometimes personalized or embellished with small, everyday objects consistent with African American tradition. Although homemade concrete markers in Greenwood date from as early as the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a surprising number date from 1960s and 1970s, a period when the Foelsch family had greatly scaled down the manufacture of their house stones and, more importantly, when African Americans were rediscovering black folk achievement as a part of a larger outburst of renewed racial pride. Dozens of small, molded concrete tablets ranging in size from roughly 1' X 2' to over 2' X 3', and from 2" to 6" thick, have been discovered throughout the entire site; there are undoubtedly many more buried or obscured. Some of these exhibit images in relief, such as crosses and open books, but most display only very basic inscriptions with essential information: name and dates, which may be crudely scratched into the concrete, etched onto a metal plate that is set in the concrete or painted directly on the surface of the marker with house paint. On some of these markers the text of the inscription is rendered entirely or partially with synthetic or reflective house letters and numbers attached to the concrete when still wet. Other symbols or inscriptions are sometimes impressed, utilizing an object as a stamp. One of the earliest concrete tablets in Greenwood, dating to just after the turn of the century, belongs to a Prince Hall Mason, his affiliation with the order identified by a shallow reversed impression of the Masonic emblem. The Emma Oneal marker (1961) (Section H) is typical of countless similar molded vernacular tablets at Greenwood; it is approximately 16" x 24" with arched top and is simply inscribed with: "EMMA ONEAL BORN JUNE 5 1903 DIED AUG 21 1961" on four horizontal, lined registers. The wet concrete was then brushed with a broom, creating a rough texture, and the surface covered with white house paint; the letters and sides are highlighted in green and red paint.

Some of the most intriguing vernacular tablets are those embellished with simple objects that might have been laid upon the grave rather than inset, had the marker not been made of concrete. Dozens of molded tablets reveal the impressions of framed photographs and other decorative objects that were once affixed; but severe vandalism and the elements have taken their toll on these delicate, vulnerable compositions. The Minnie Peak marker, for example, is a molded tablet with a typical scrawled inscription. However, two objects were originally added to the face of the stone: a small piece of carved, decorative wood ornament and a small rectangular mirror. The entire marker is painted white, and the objects outlined with red paint. The mirror is consistent with African custom. Historians have noted the use of mirrors in African-derived grave decoration in the South; when laid flat upon the grave, a mirror is another reference to water, and thus functions as dividing line, separating worlds or dimensions, as did the shells on the Landers grave or the more common mounded white gravel that blankets graves

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throughout the site.<sup>29</sup> Although now situated horizontally over the grave, it is likely that the marker was intended to be an upright and thus does not completely conform to tradition. Hence, the explanation for the previously mentioned mirror could also be a simple one: it may just be intended to reflect life. But as Thompson has made clear, a mirror, like other shiny objects placed on African American graves in the South, is often said to emit a "flash" of the departed spirit.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to vernacular tablets, there are also three-dimensional homemade concrete markers in predictable and not-so-predictable forms; simple, unadorned crosses in various sizes are most common. Among the more enigmatic forms is the Ruby Floyd marker (Section 4) from 1972, a concrete box with a rectangular extension and an attached metal plate with professional engraving. The entire marker appears to be poured in one piece, utilizing a reinforced cardboard box as a mold. Oddly shaped, it looks more like a trophy than a marker and at first glance resembles a child's chair.

Greenwood also contains interesting adaptations of manufactured objects—architectural ornament, concrete blocks and parking stops, yard ornaments, and other items--reused creatively as grave markers. Over twenty of these objects have been uncovered and identified so far. Obviously, they were economical, as well as ready-made and easily obtained. But they could also be unique, even monumental, when compared to small manufactured stones or simple vernacular markers; furthermore, they show delightful imagination on the part of the descendants who wished their loved ones to be remembered in an unusual way. The use of these manufactured items fits within the tradition of employing common material possessions as grave ornament and is not uncommon in African American cemeteries, both urban and rural, throughout the state. One singular example at Greenwood is a central portion of a molded concrete fountain: the face, in relief, of a lion, spigot in mouth, within a stylized backdrop. Whether intentional or not, in this particular context, the fountain itself is a not-so-subtle reference to water and its traditional connotation.

Another more abstract example is the curious "Bench Stone" (Section A), marking an unidentified grave. At first glance, it appears to be an object of obscure, possibly African origin. Dating to the 1970s, this concrete monument was once part of a commercially manufactured bench, such as one might find at a park or fast-food restaurant--only inverted and slightly altered. Removed from its original context, however, it is not immediately obvious that it is a bench, so it appears cryptic and even mysterious. Along with a handful of similar objects, these pieces of fountain and bench evidence tradition and add whimsy to the largely repetitive and predictable landscape of this urban cemetery.

In March 2002, as a class project William Woods University students excavated a piece of what appeared at first to be architectural ornament, but which soon proved to be problematic. The bi-facial "Serpent Stone" (Section G), constructed of glazed terracotta and originally mounted on a marble base, depicts a coiled serpent surrounded by decorative ornament. Close examination suggests that it was crafted as a complete unit; there is little evidence that it was ever part of a larger object, and certainly not attached to a building as initially speculated. Moreover, the repetitive triangular design outlining the body of the serpent is not dissimilar from African/African American craft motifs. The overall circular form of the serpent is at home in the cemetery in that it is reminiscent of archetypal symbols of death and rebirth. If salvaged from a larger work, it could not have had a more fitting "rebirth" itself than as a grave marker.

<sup>29</sup> Vlach, 144.

<sup>30</sup> Thompson, 142.

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This practice of adaptive reuse of everyday objects is common in African American cemeteries, and numerous examples exist in urban and rural Missouri.

The majority of the remaining stones date from 1940s-1980s, and are modern, flat and upright, relatively simple markers with no distinctive aesthetic features. In general they were locally manufactured and relatively inexpensive. Occasional exceptions—more elaborate or larger stones that date to this period—indicate that members of St. Louis's black middle class continued to be buried at Greenwood into the 1970s.

Because Greenwood is one of the few sites associated with an un- or under-documented minority population, the information provided by the headstones there is a crucial, if fragmentary, historical record that must be preserved. Birth and death dates, epitaphs, documentation of veterans from American wars and even the styles and materials of grave markers augment the historical information available to us about St. Louis's vital black population across more than a century. Thus, as a social document of the Jim Crow era, reflecting the development of St. Louis' black community from Reconstruction to the present day, Greenwood's historical value is without question. But its real cultural and human value lies in the persistence of forms and traditions emerging--or yet to emerge--from the layers of ignorance and neglect. In light of evidenced traditions, Greenwood provides us with a history that transcends the remaining names and dates--a history that is ancient, distinct and indelible.

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### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA—UTM REFERENCES

POINT	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
5	15	735830	4285220
6	15	735740	4285270
7	15	735875	4285550
8	15	735520	4285735
9	15	735540	4285780

### Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 10 and 11 of Darby Hill and part of Survey 1913, St. Louis County, Missouri

The boundaries of the cemetery are also shown as the heavy black line on the attached survey map.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the original acreage, cemetery plots, sexton's lot and all the property historically associated with Greenwood Cemetery.

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**Greenwood Cemetery  
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The following is true for all of the photographs:

Property	Greenwood Cemetery
Location	St. Louis County, Missouri
Photographer	Brett Rogers
Date of photographs	See below
Location of negatives	In possession of nomination preparer.

1. VIEW OF: Greenwood Gatepost (east), May, 2002
2. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, Section D, view looking northwest, May, 2002
3. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, Section G, view looking west, March, 2001
4. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, Section O, view looking south, n.d.
5. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, Section A, view looking northwest, n.d.
6. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, section O, view looking northwest, March, 2002
7. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, section O, view looking south, March, 2002
8. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, section F, view looking southeast, March, 2002
9. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, section K, view looking north, March, 2002
10. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, section M, view looking east, March, 2002
11. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, Section E, view looking west, March, 2001
12. VIEW OF: Cemetery Landscape, Section D, Washington family plot, March, 2001
13. VIEW OF: Foelsch Concrete Marker, 1939, Section I, May, 2002
14. VIEW OF: Harrold Stone, Section A. May, 2002
15. VIEW OF: Bench Marker, concrete, c.1960, Section A, March, 2001
16. VIEW OF: Serpent Marker, glazed terra cotta, c. 1900, Section G, May, 2002
17. VIEW OF: Romeo West Stone, limestone, 1919, Section H, May, 2001
18. VIEW OF: Statuary: standing female with flowers, limestone, c.1900, Section M, March, 2002
19. VIEW OF: Grant Landers headstone with inset shells, concrete, 1933, Section 3, March, 2002
20. VIEW OF: Emma Oneal headstone, concrete, 1961, Section H, March, 2002
21. VIEW OF: Washington Reed Headstone, Section D, May, 2002
22. VIEW OF: Mary Hall, Informant, May, 2002
23. VIEW OF Granite cross gravestone. Section A, view looking northwest.
23. VIEW OF: Friends of Greenwood Cemetery Sign, May, 2002

# GREENWOOD CEMETERY

The underlying and genuine of its kind of land where plotted, have caused the owner to be authorized in the manner as shown on the above plat, which shall hereafter be known as Government Land.

In Stiles Mather the Gravestone Cemetery Association has consented to be signed by its secretary and its respective and to be signed at this New York City of July 1889.

1899.  
*Wm. A. Fackel,*  
*President.*  
*Joseph R. Fackel,*  
*President.*

State of Missouri }  
County of St. Louis } S.S.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> day of July 1909, before me appeared Adolph R. Felsch he was personally known, who being by me duly sworn, did say that he is the President of the Greenwood Cemetery Association, a corpse now of the State of Missouri, and that the seal affixed to the foregoing instrument is the corporate seal of said corporation, and that said instrument was signed and sealed in behalf of said corporation, by authority of its Board of Directors and said Adolph R. Felsch, authorized and empowered to do the free act and deed of said corporation.

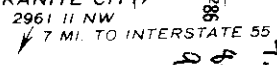
words of evidence and law except a witness, acknowledged and instrument has signed and one and of my opinion.  
 in Testimony thereof I have forewarned of my hand' and affixed my material seal this the 26<sup>th</sup> day of July 1909.  
 My commission expires March 27<sup>th</sup> 1912.  
 John H. Greene,  
 Notary Public.

FILED FOR RECORD OFF. 7-1909 AT 9:15 A.M. PETER WETZEL: RECORDER.

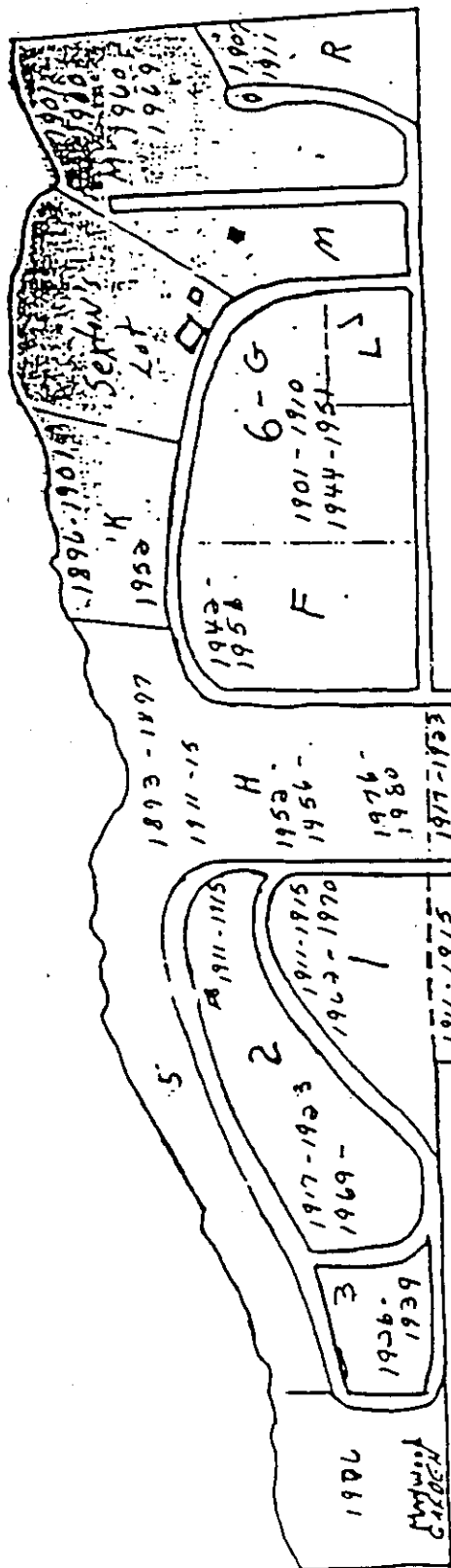
**Greenwood Cemetery**  
St. Louis County, Missouri

**HAMBURGER**

60' N.



1. 15/735 110/1435730  
2. 15/732 850/4 70500  
3. 15/732 220/14 65940  
4. 15/733 140 1405 490  
5. 15/733 830/1405 220  
6. 15/735 7410/1435720  
7. 15/732 37410/1405 550  
8. 15/732 520/1405 755  
9. 15/732 510/1405 750



PUBLIC GROUNDS, MONUMENT SECTIONS, FAMILY LOTS, CREMAINS GARDENS, MONUMENTS AND

# GREENWOOD MEMORIAL

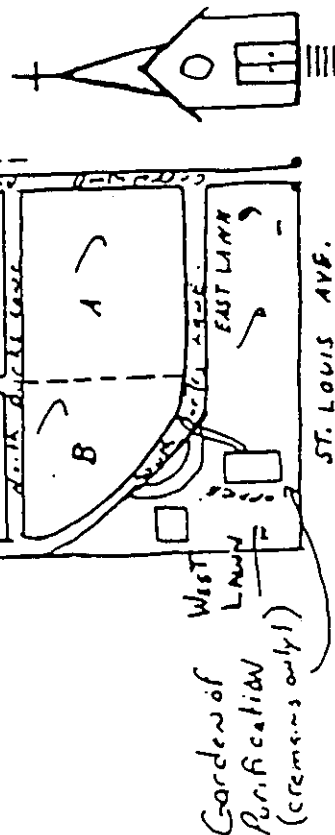
a not-for-profit, non-endowed cemetery

Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Block \_\_\_\_\_

Range \_\_\_\_\_ Row \_\_\_\_\_ Grave \_\_\_\_\_ Depth \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery Hours 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

(314) 726-0045 - 6571 St. Louis Avenue, Milldale, Missouri



# GREENWOOD CEMETERY

The underlying reasons of the kind of bond above published, have caused the same to be withdrawn in the measure we above in this case partly admit shall have  
after to know as Government Security  
in which through the Government Security Association has caused him to be signed by the president, countermanded by its secretary and its  
executive, and to go out on the 20th day of July 1904.

The Government Security Association  
Wash.

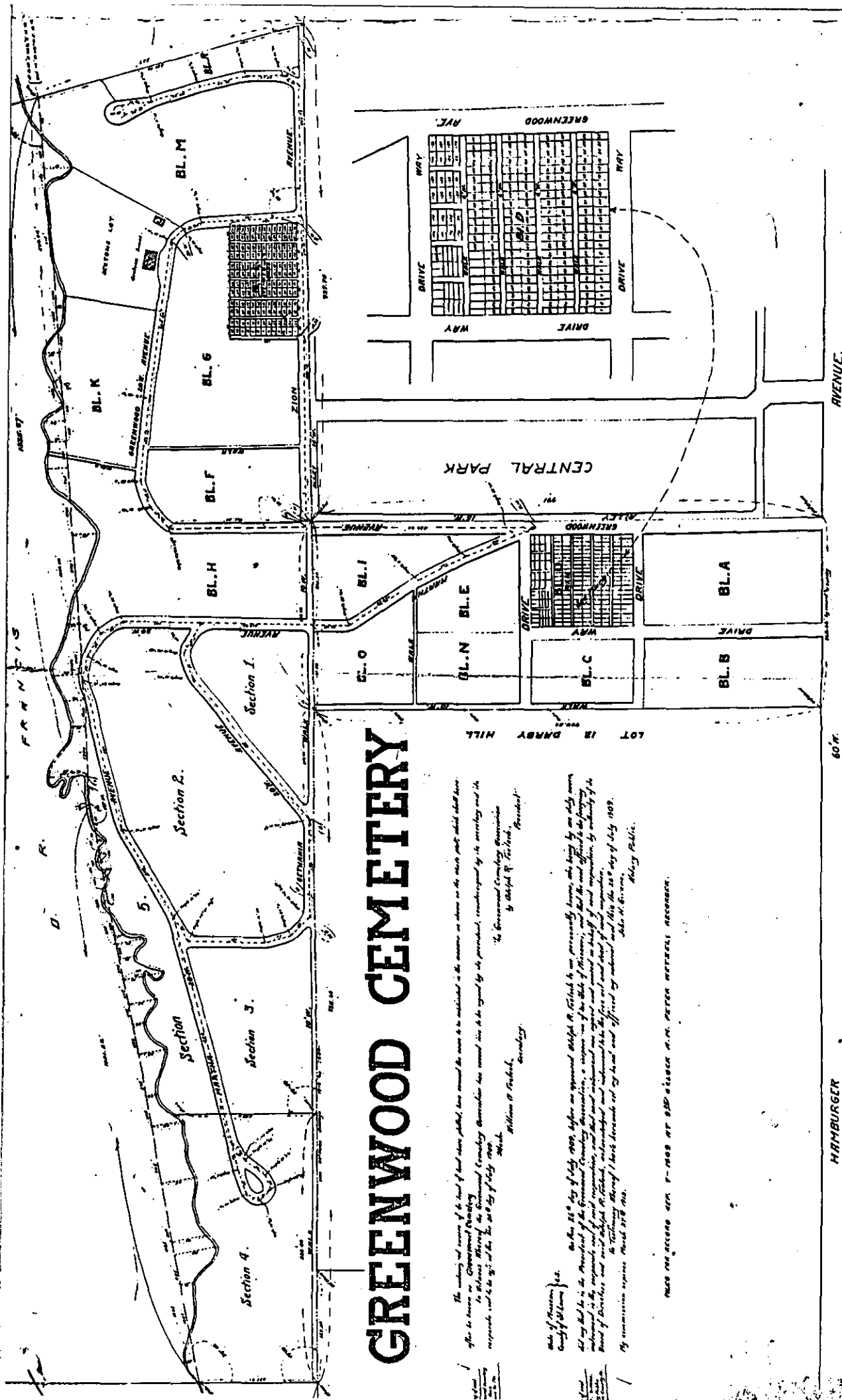
The Government Comptrolary Revisions  
by Arthur R. Fairbank, President.

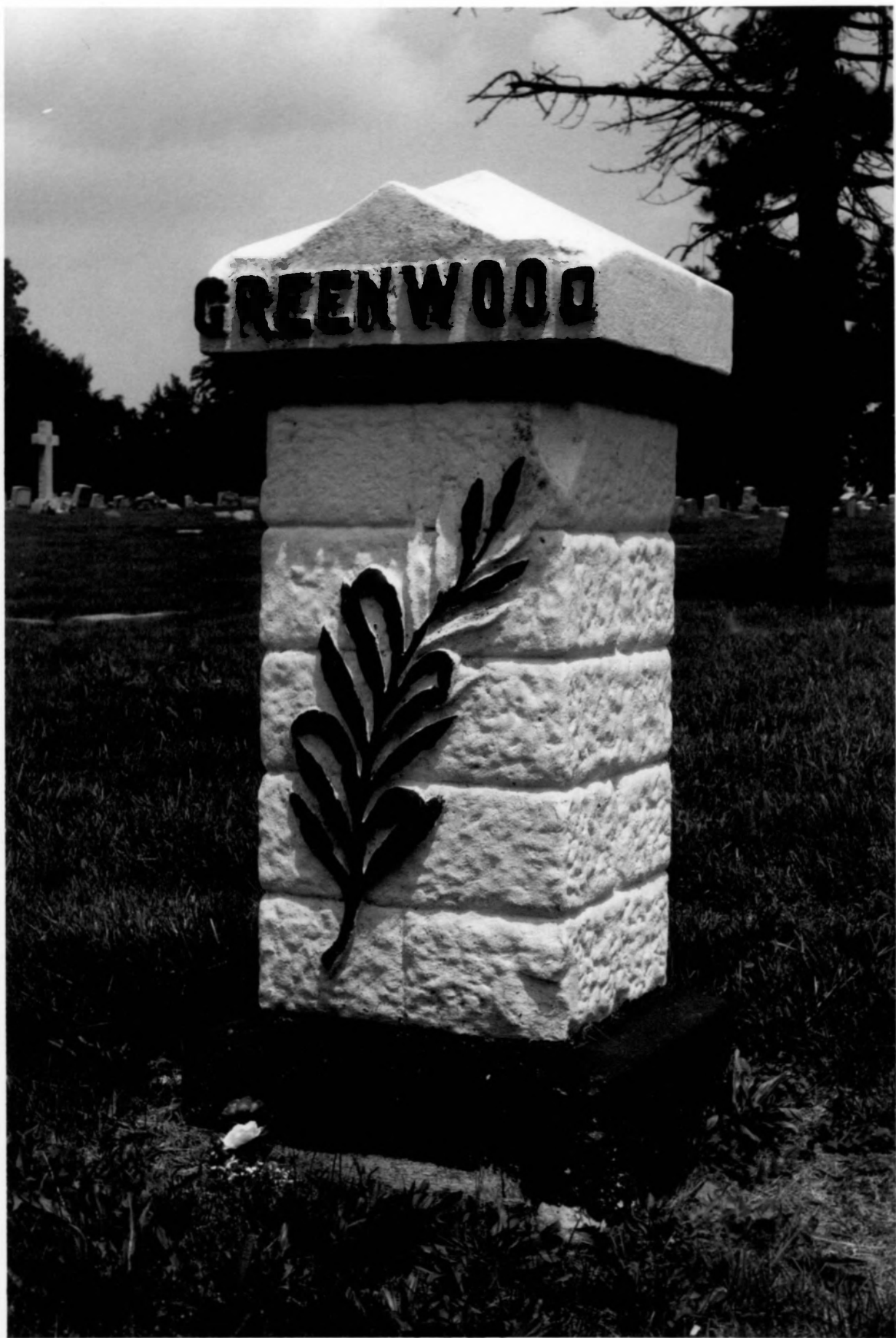
William A. Forbush,  
Secretary.

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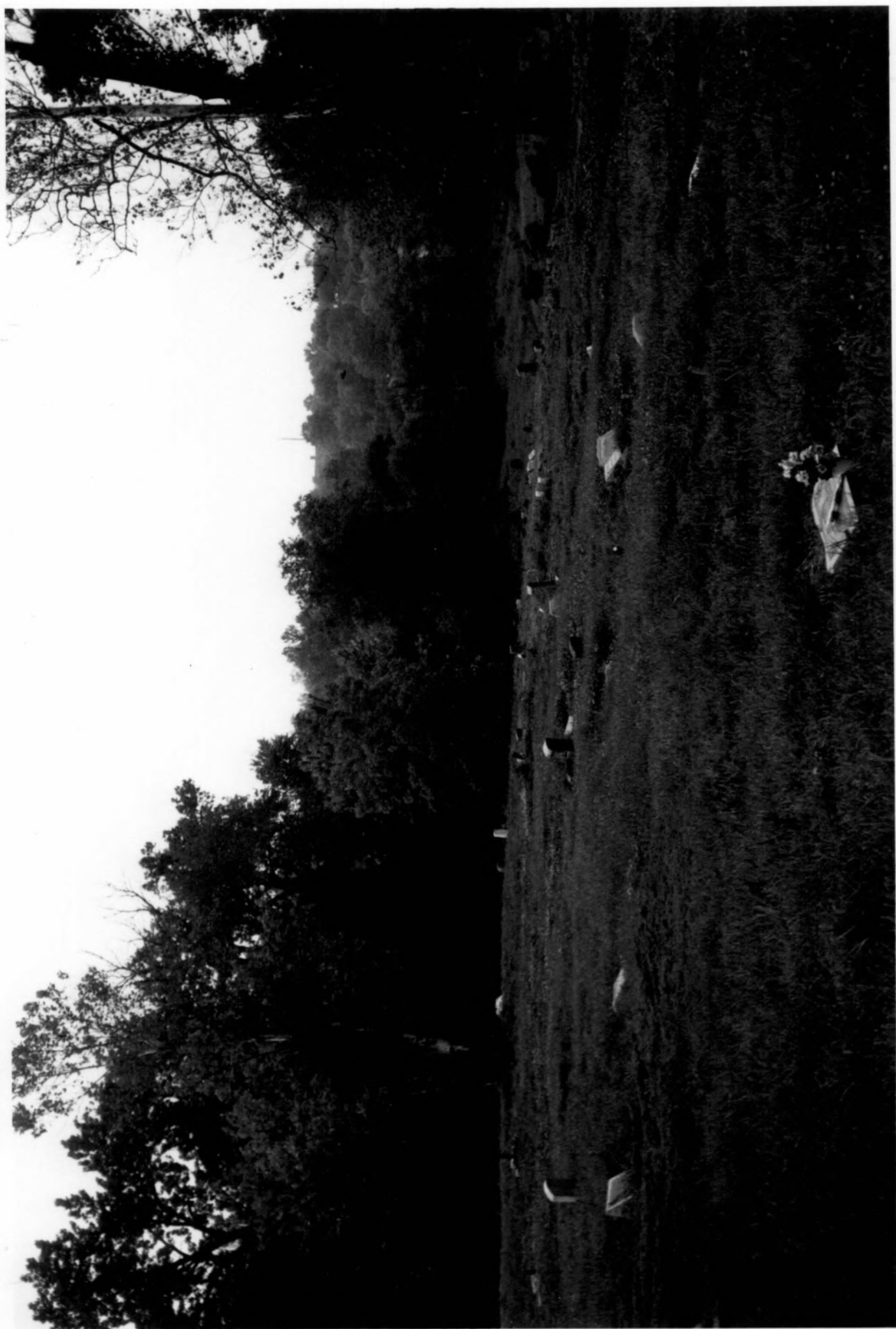
John N. Guzman  
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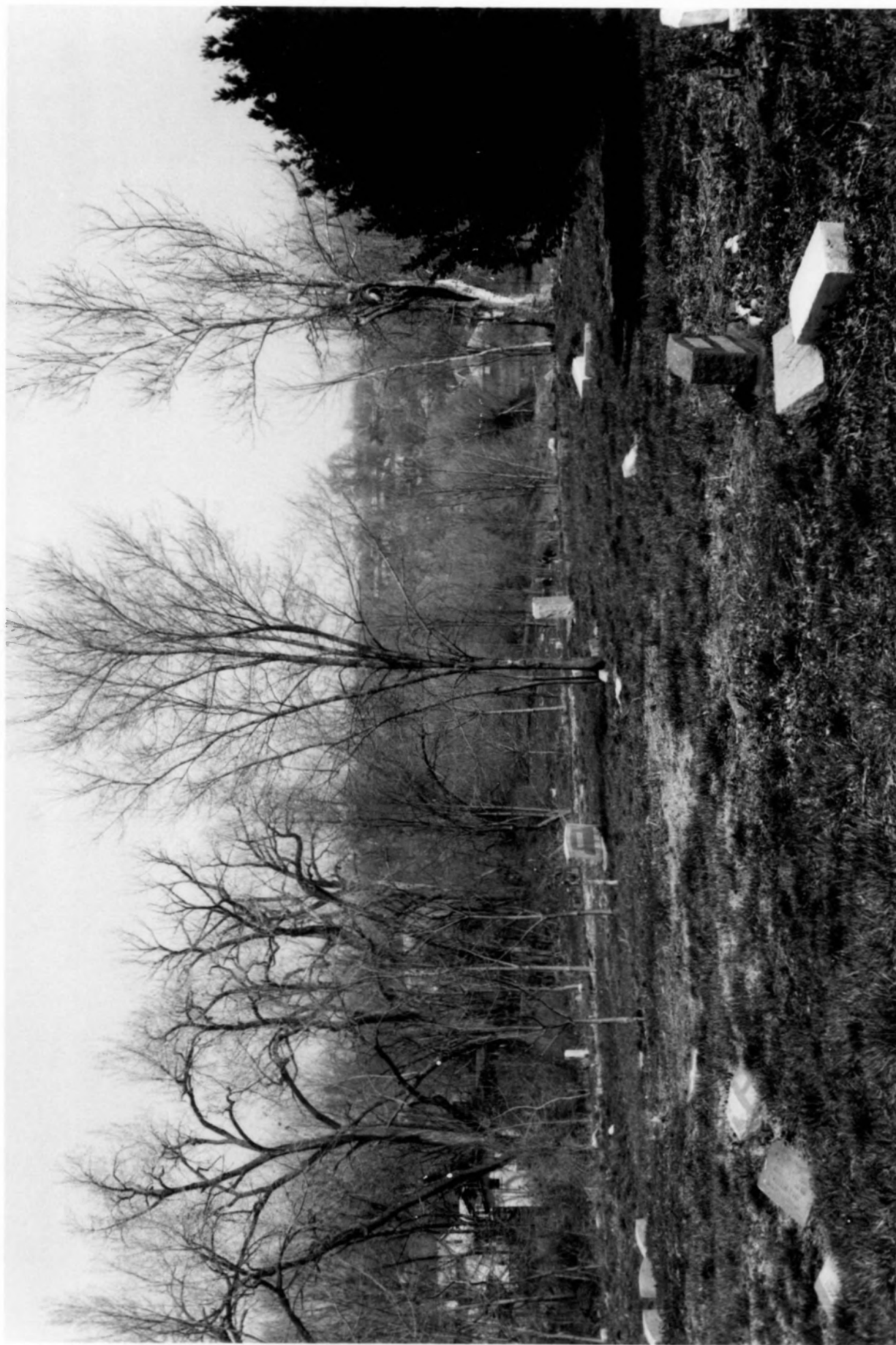










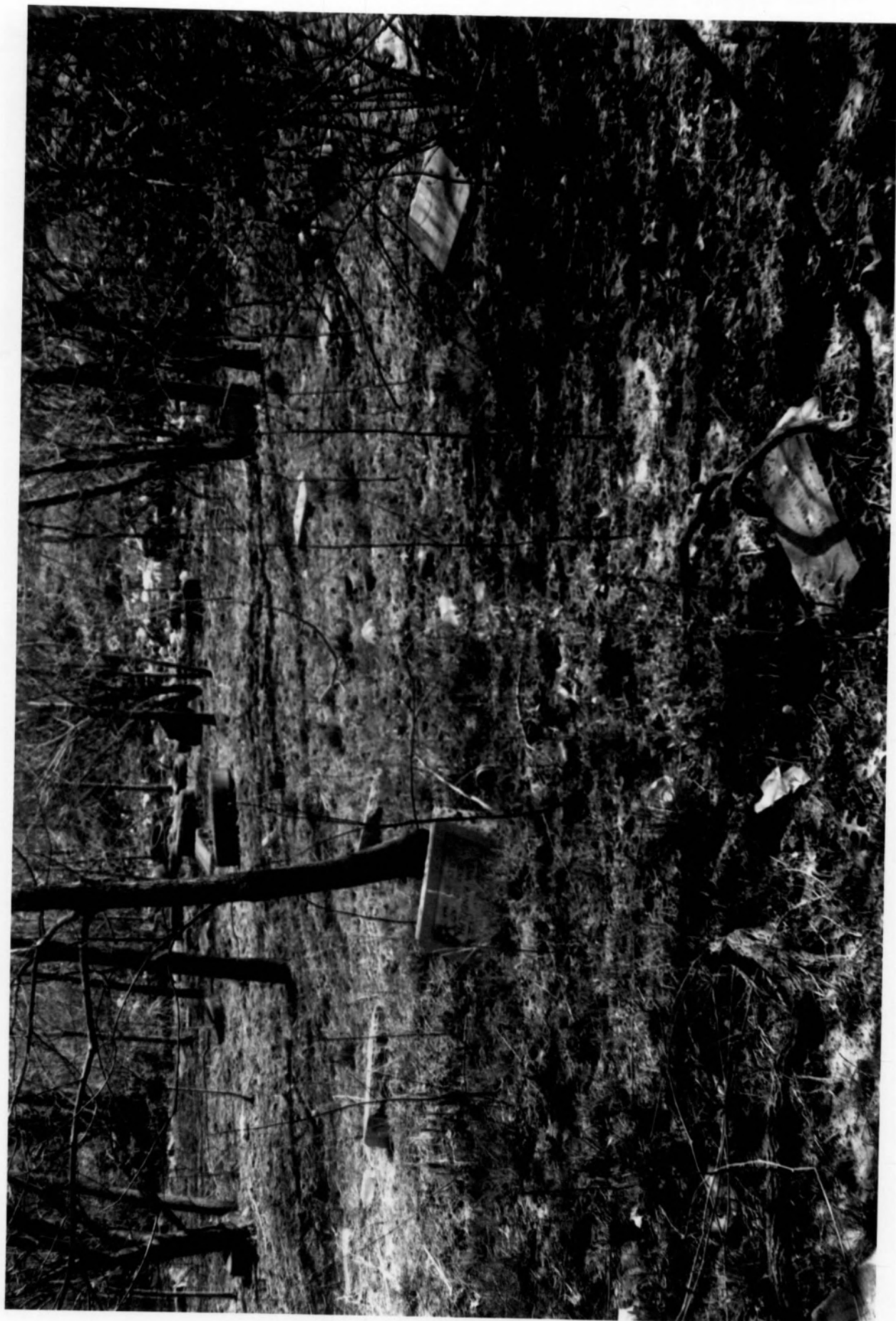






















MAGGIE BROWN  
1860

LORRAINE  
1894

FRED  
1893 1956



























# GREENWOOD CEMETERY RESTORATION PROJECT

## Sponsored by:

St. Louis County  
The Missouri National Guard  
The Whitaker Foundation  
St. Alphonsus Rock Church  
The Urban League

Ted Foster and Sons Mortuary  
Monsanto  
The City Of Hillisdale  
The Open Space Council  
Employees of Southwestern Bell

The Friends of Greenwood Cemetery Association

...and Volunteers Like You

HELP CLEAN-UP THE CEMETERY ANY SATURDAY, 9AM TO 3PM

